



# HMThinking



## Board and CEO Leadership at a premium in the Turbulent 20's.

A more charged geopolitical environment, climate change and sustainability, technological transformation, a growing but ageing population and wealth creation and its distribution – these are the macro challenges that all leaders – business, political, NGO and charity – in some shape and form have been grappling with over the past few years.

The events of 2020 – a global pandemic and the death of George Floyd – have brought into stark focus many of the challenges and accelerated the need for answers. The words of author William Gibson come to mind “the future is already here, it’s just not very evenly distributed”.

So, in launching the Board and CEO practice at Hedley May, we do it against this backdrop. It is our view that we are now in the turbulent 20's; a decade in which leadership will be at a premium. At Board

and CEO level, it will require individuals with courage and empathy in equal measure willing to go against accepted norms and bravely chart new courses. And importantly it will require leaders who can inspire and take their people with them on those journeys.

Our role will be to help our clients, be they Plc, private or mutual, find the best leaders, both executive and non-executive, to lead their organisations through this period.



Alongside this, we also look forward to being a forum for discussing and defining the challenges and opportunities facing Chairs, Boards and CEOs over the next year and beyond. Throughout the course of 2021 Hedley May's Board and CEO practice will launch a series of discussions, events and papers exploring and debating a range of these key issues, including amongst others:



### The responsibility of a Plc – shareholder versus all stakeholders

Is the shareholder, despite the rhetoric, still the dominant influence, or in the light of the rise of purpose and the ESG agenda (as well as an increased desire for transparency) do we now require our Plcs to be the beacons for what great businesses should look like? And if the latter, how do we achieve that?



### Leaders as role models

In light of the world we are now living in, what are the skillsets and attributes required of Chairs and CEOs for the next decade? CEOs have historically been judged for what they do, not who they are. To what extent do we now require our leaders to be role models?



### Diversity

We know diversity is important, but how do we ensure we have moved beyond the 'tick-box' and created truly inclusive boards and organisations? In any event, how will the diversity agenda evolve beyond gender and ethnicity and how do we respond now rather than being behind the curve?



### Agility

So many companies surprised themselves with their speed of decision making during the crisis last year. This decade will require businesses to maintain that agility, flexing to a fast changing agenda. What are the ways in which Boards, their structure, governance and modus operandi need to be shaped in order to be fit for purpose for tomorrow?



### The employee as a stakeholder

The contract between organisations and their stakeholders has shifted and expanded beyond the traditional in recent years. The expectations of one group in particular, employees, has been rising and the competition for talent over the next decade will be fiercer than ever. By 2025, 75% of talent will be millennials. For Boards, how do you know whether your organisation is a magnet for talent? How do you know whether your employees are advocates or potential whistleblowers? How do you strengthen and nurture the bridge between leadership at the top and the rest of the organisation?



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**Sandrine and Giles joined Hedley May to co-create a Board and CEO practice that is different; built on the foundations of deep global expertise, creativity and trusted advice.**